

Ottoman Empire and Mediterranean in 16th Century

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This study focuses on Ottoman empire and Mediterranean in 16th century. From the beginning of the 16th century, Ottoman pursued expansionist policy in Mediterranean. It led to direct confrontations between Ottoman and Spanish empire. As a result of that, the 16th Century Mediterranean has often been described as a battleground between the two great empires of Catholic Spain in the West and the Muslims Ottoman Empire in the East. It was a century during which the two great empires gave evidence of their formidable might. 1571 Preveza victory brought Ottoman superiority in the Mediterranean. But battle of Lepanto undermined her dominance. Despite that, Ottoman held the strong hand in the Mediterranean. After Tunisia went under absolute Ottoman rule at 1574, Spain ceased to struggle in the Mediterranean and directed to the Atlantic.

Despite intense confrontation between two parties until the end of 16th century, commercial relations were maintained in indirect ways. It can be claimed that commerce was never interrupted. Because both parties needed the products of the other, relations were kept intact. European ports holding Ottoman imperial pledge mediated the trade between Spain and Ottoman empire and exchanged Eastern goods with Spanish silver. At the beginning major intermediary between two parties was Venice. Later, French port of Marseille took over this role. After that Marseille became one of the major ports for trade between Spanish empire and Ottoman empire.